

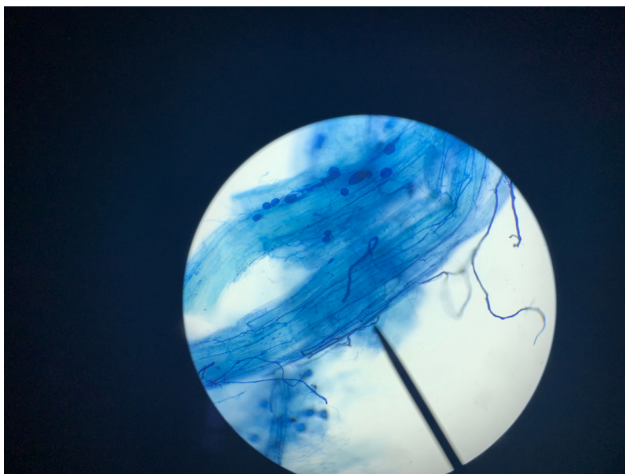
CENTER DESIGN TALK SERIES  
2022-23  
BARNARD DESIGN

organized by Rebecca Naegele

Barnard College's 2022-23 **Design Talk Series** is a series of talks and workshops by artists, designers, and educators whose practices engage in ecological design and sustainability.

These events include discussion and hands-on workshops on topics including traditional making practices, mycorrhizal networks and the design of urban ecosystems, and healthy and sustainable materials for design and fabrication.

This talk and workshop series is organized by Design Center Coordinator Rebecca Naegele and took place in the Design Center at Barnard College.



Backstrap Weaving using Zero Waste Fabrics  
with **Cynthia Alberto** - Nov 17, 2022

DESIGNING THE FUNGAL CITY - Exploring  
mycorrhizal networks in the built environment  
with **Vanessa Harden** - Dec 6, 2022

Healthy Building: Carbon and Materials with  
**Parsons Healthy Materials Lab** - Feb 1, 2023



# Backstrap Weaving using Zero Waste Fabrics with Cynthia Alberto

The founder and director of Weaving Hand, **Cynthia Alberto**, teaches back-strap weaving. This workshop introduces participants to the history of back-strap weaving, an ancient yet globally practiced tradition. Using modern back-strap looms, participants develop woven projects with an emphasis on sustainable, zero-waste weaving.

Three techniques will be harnessed during this workshop and participants will walk away confidently knowing how to practice plain weave, interlocking, and vertical stripes. In addition to developing their tactile and woven skills, participants study samples of back-strap looms and fabrics from various cultures (the Philippines, Indonesia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.)

# Cynthia Alberto Bio

An artist, designer, and founder of the Brooklyn-based Weaving and Healing arts studio Weaving Hand, **Cynthia Alberto** seeks to bridge traditional and contemporary weaving techniques, drawing inspiration from ancient communities of Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Her artwork, performances, and public weaving projects honor traditional and artisanal techniques while also incorporating unconventional materials and a zero-waste philosophy.

Throughout her artwork and teaching, Alberto continuously explores the many intersections between weaving and healing, as well as craft and sustainability. Inspired by her studio practice and teaching, Cynthia continuously explores diverse relationships between weaving, healing, inclusive art, craft, and sustainability.





# **DESIGNING THE FUNGAL CITY:**

## **Exploring mycorrhizal networks in the built environment with Vanessa Harden**

With restoration efforts presently being conducted above ground in urban environments to enable green spaces to flourish and thrive, we realize that we have been overlooking the critical underground actors that contribute to the wellbeing of our urban ecosystems.

Humans have evicted fungi from the soil. Our industrialization and urbanization has led us to build. underground infrastructure that has taken the place of soil based microorganisms such as mycorrhizal fungi which are vital to the survival of plant species above ground. How can fungi [re]claim space in the built environment? This public talk explores how mycorrhizal networks, and thus plant connectivity can be beneficial to the design of urban ecosystems.

# Vanessa Harden Bio

**Vanessa Harden** is an artist and designer focused on creating thought-provoking experiences and installations in the built environment. Her current research focuses on how mycorrhizal networks facilitate plant connectivity in cities. She is developing tools and methodologies to help support the fitness and functions of urban ecosystems by incorporating healthy soil fungal communities and networks into the design of urban environments.

She is the founder of Subversive Gardener, an IF Concept Award winning design project turned non-profit organization that focuses on environmental education, design exploration, and public intervention connected to the guerrilla gardening subculture. Vanessa is also the founder of Wild Flag Studios, a design studio that creates interactive sculptures and produces art installations for clients worldwide. She has taught as well as served as guest critic at numerous institutions and is currently in the Doctor of Design program (DDes) at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.



# Healthy Building: Carbon and Materials with Parsons Healthy Materials Lab



Have you ever wondered what the connection might be between what you design, embodied carbon and toxic chemicals?

This hands-on workshop with Cristina Handal and Alison Mears of **Parsons Healthy Materials Lab** explores the connections between embodied carbon, chemicals, and design materials to learn how to incorporate this knowledge into your design work.

# Parsons Healthy Materials Lab

is a design research lab dedicated to a world in which people's health is placed at the center of all design decisions. The lab is committed to raising awareness about toxic chemicals in building products and to creating resources for designers and architects to make healthier places for all people to live. Their goals are for healthier spaces and healthier lives. To achieve this, **they strive to:**

- Improve common building materials to reduce exposure to toxics and improve health.
- Foster knowledge and awareness of today's healthier material alternatives—make them more marketable, accessible, and popular.
- Empower communities living in poverty to remove toxics in their built environments.
- Educate professionals, teachers and students about the issue of material health and enable them to change current practices.
- Work with manufacturers to promote transparency and drive innovation.





This zine was created by Rebecca Naegele,  
Design Center Coordinator, 2023



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